Observer's status to India in OIC

1011. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Russia has been accorded the status of an Observer at the Organisation of Islamic countries meeting in Malaysia;

(b) whether India is also likely to put forward its claim as observer's status in the meeting; and

(c) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) and (b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Holding elections in Afghanistan

1012. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Afghan Election Commission has requested the Indian Government for expertise in holding elections;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) and (b) Yes. The Chairman, Interim Electoral Commission of Afghanistan alongwith Chief Electoral Officer of United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) had visited India from October 19—23, 2003 for holding discussions with Election Commission of India on various electoral matters of mutual interest, including sharing of India's experience in the conduct of elections.

(c) Government of India has supplied 65 electronic voting machines to United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan for use during the Constitutional Loya Jirga in December 2003, alongwith deputation of four experts for operation and technical support.